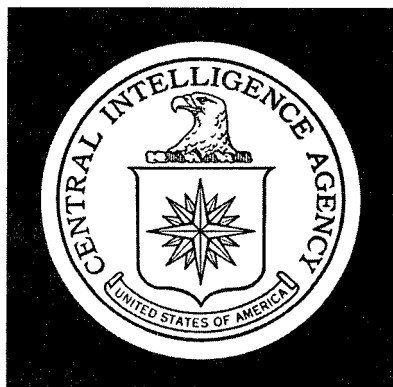


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Dept. review completed

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Information as of 1600
16 January 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Members of South Vietnam's ruling Directorate have been meeting with Constituent Assembly leaders to work out a compromise on sections of the draft constitution which the government finds objectionable.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
No major engagements were reported between allied and Communist forces on 16 January (Para. 1). Twenty-three US/ARVN battalions are continuing to press Operation CEDAR FALLS against the Viet Cong's Iron Triangle base area in Binh Duong Province (Para. 2). South Korean Marines have terminated Operation SEINE after nine days in Quang Ngai Province (Para. 3). ARVN 21st Division search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 275 encountered heavy Viet Cong resistance in Chuong Thien Province on 15 January (Para. 4). South Vietnamese CIDG paramilitary units inflicted significant losses on an estimated Communist battalion in Phuoc Long Province on 13-14 January (Para. 5). Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army units sustained sharp reverses in three abortive attacks launched against GVN and allied positions in Quang Tri, Quang Nam, and Vinh Binh provinces during 14-15 January (Paras. 6-8); but achieved notable success in a two-battalion attack in Quang Tin Province (Para. 9). Chinese medical personnel reported in South Vietnam (Para. 10). Captured Viet Cong document discusses Viet Cong combat principles, guerrilla warfare, and observations on allied combat principles (Paras. 11-14).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Members of the ruling Directorate have been meeting with Constituent Assembly leaders to reach a compromise on sections of the draft constitution which the government finds objectionable (Paras. 1-3).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: There is nothing of significance to report.

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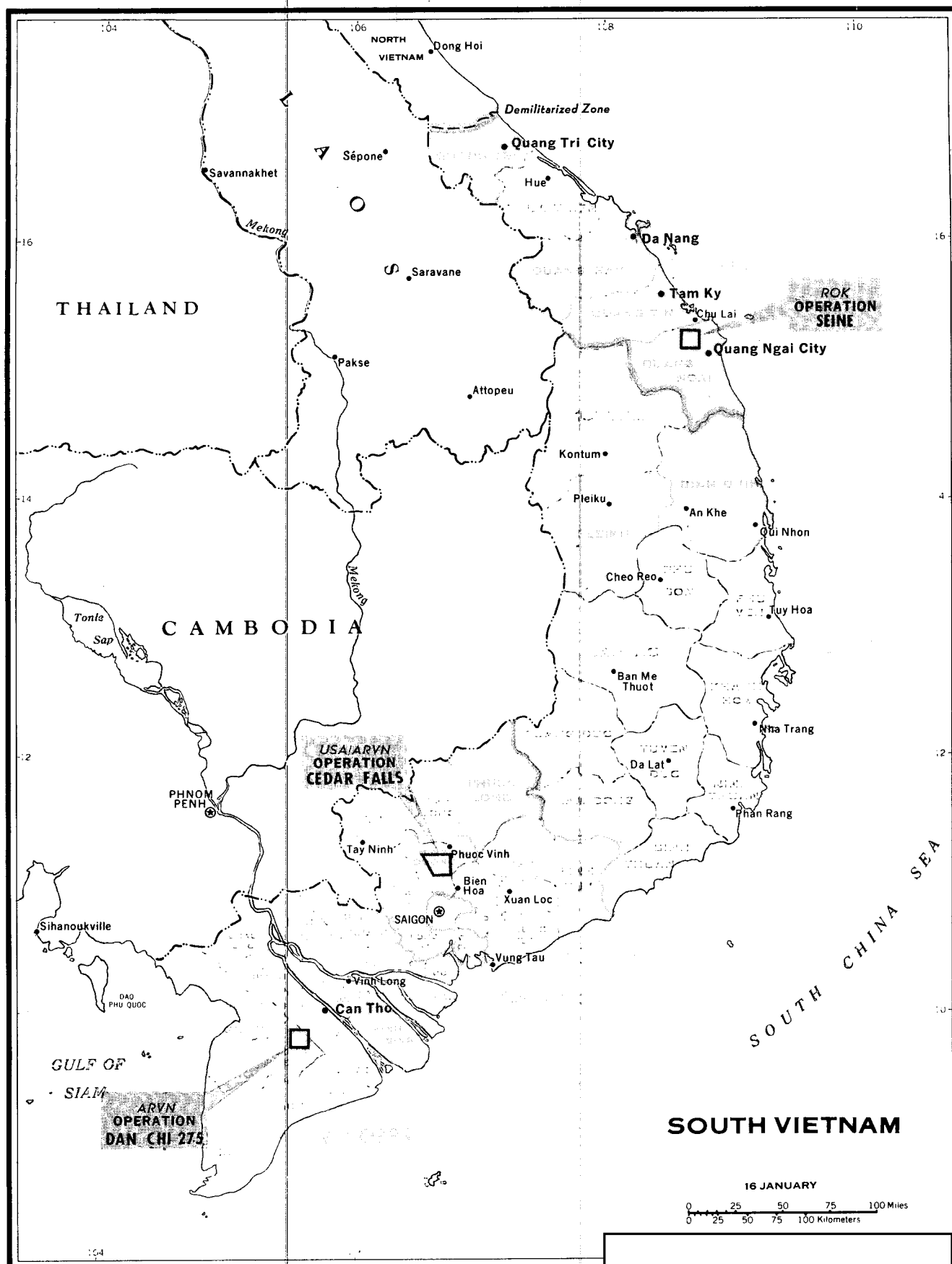
IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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VI. Other Major Aspects: It is possible that the disruptions in China may affect rail deliveries of aid to North Vietnam (Paras. 1-3).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US combat forces are participating in 12 of the 35 battalion-size or larger allied search-and-destroy operations currently in progress. No major enemy contact was reported in any of these operations, however, on 16 January.

2. Twenty-three allied battalions are continuing to press their major offensive--Operation CEDAR FALLS--against the Communist base area--the Iron Triangle--north of Saigon in Binh Duong Province. Cumulative enemy losses in the nine-day-old ground sweep stand at 389 killed, 69 captured, 406 suspects detained, and nearly 300 weapons seized. In addition, allied forces have captured 2,307 tons of rice, of which 1,924 tons have been destroyed to date. US casualties thus far stand at 44 killed and 228 wounded. A total of 808 tactical air sorties and 79 B-52 saturation bombing strikes have been flown in support of the operation.

3. South Korean (ROK) Marines on 14 January favorably terminated Operation SEINE, a nine-day search-and-destroy ground sweep conducted some nine miles west-northwest of Quang Ngai city in Quang Ngai Province. One hundred and forty Viet Cong/NVA troops were reported killed, five captured, and 71 suspects apprehended. ROK losses included 31 killed and 57 wounded.

4. Heavy fighting was reported by elements of the ARVN 21st Division during the opening phase of search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 275 in the delta province of Chuong Thien on 15 January. Preliminary casualty reports indicate friendly losses of six killed (1 US) and 67 wounded (2 US) compared with known enemy losses of 96 killed and two captured. In addition, the Viet Cong massacred 41 of 49 South Vietnamese military and civilian personnel incarcerated in a POW camp approximately 29 miles southwest of Can Tho before it was overrun by the 21st Division sweep force.

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5. South Vietnamese CIDG paramilitary units inflicted significant losses on an estimated Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalion in a series of heavy skirmishes along the Cambodian border in Phuoc Long Province on 13 January. The enemy force was first encountered by one CIDG reconnaissance company on patrol approximately 86 miles north-northeast of Saigon. One additional CIDG company, together with tactical air and helicopter support, was subsequently dispatched as reinforcement. Communist losses were placed at 55 killed, in contrast to government casualties of three killed and 8 wounded.

6. Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces sustained sharp reverses in three attacks launched against GVN and allied positions in Quang Tri, Quang Nam, and Vinh Binh provinces during 14-15 January. On 15 January, an estimated Communist company lost 46 killed during an abortive mortar and automatic weapons assault against an ARVN district headquarters seven miles north of Quang Tri city, the capital of South Vietnam's northernmost province. ARVN losses were eight killed and 11 wounded.

7. In Quang Nam Province, on 14 January, a US Marine security patrol engaged an estimated 100 enemy regulars who were preparing for an attack on Marine positions six miles south of Da Nang. The Marine contact forced the enemy to initiate a premature attack against elements of two Marine companies--an action which cost the Communists 60 killed. Thirteen Marines were killed and 22 wounded during the 30-minute battle.

8. In the delta province of Vinh Binh, a Viet Cong force of undetermined size attacked and overran an ARVN outpost 40 miles east-southeast of Can Tho on 14 January. The outpost was supported by AC-47 aircraft, and a three-battalion reaction force from the ARVN 14th Regiment was also committed. Sixty-three enemy troops were killed during heavy fighting compared with friendly casualties of 19 killed, eight wounded, and one missing.

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9. Despite reverses suffered in the above actions, enemy units did manage to conduct a successful two-battalion attack against a Popular Forces platoon in night defensive positions approximately 17 miles southwest of Tam Ky, capital of the northern coastal province of Quang Tin. Elements of the attacking force also ambushed a reaction force of two reinforced Regional Forces companies en route to the beleaguered outpost. Friendly losses during the six-hour engagement were 13 killed, 25 wounded, and two missing; Communist losses are unknown.

Chinese Medical Personnel Reported in South Vietnam

10. A recently interrogated North Vietnamese defector reports having seen a Chinese Communist medical technician or doctor at a Viet Cong field hospital in early 1966. The commander of the medical company at the hospital--where the defector was a patient--stated that the Chinese visitor was a member of a Chinese Communist medical technician group working at a VC hospital in Pleiku Province, near the Cambodian border. The defector reports that the doctor examined patients and issued medicines to them. The source made no mention of Chinese Communist military advisers or combat personnel being in the South.

Viet Cong Document Discusses Military Tactics

11. A Viet Cong document prepared by the political officer of Military Region 5 in September 1966, and captured on 10 December 1966 in Quang Nam Province, discusses Viet Cong combat principles, guerrilla warfare, and observations on allied operations. According to the document, Communist Main Force units are to conduct military activities under the campaign headings of "offensive" and "counteroffensive." The latter type of campaign appears to be directed at allied sweep operations of Viet Cong "liberated areas."

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12. Other "combat principles" to be applied, according to the document, are: increased guerrilla activity in areas controlled by US troops; attacks directed at strategic allied installations and roads; and armed activities in and around urban areas in order to complement Viet Cong political activities. The latter "principle" probably indicates greater emphasis on terrorism and assassination.

13. The document states that guerrilla warfare has a highly important position, and that greater successes will occur if main forces coordinate closely with local and guerrilla forces. In Military Region 5 the mission of guerrilla warfare is defined as: countering sweeps in liberated areas, expanding "liberated areas," stepping up military and political activities, building solid mountain bases, protecting liaison corridors, intensifying combat activities to inflict the maximum attrition possible on allied forces, and strengthening Communist forces, especially main force elements.

14. The final section of the document contains observations on allied operations. It indicates that the Viet Cong can often anticipate allied incursions into "liberated areas" because of a noticeable increase in allied intelligence collection efforts. It observes that heliborne tactics are used in blocking Viet Cong routes of withdrawal, and heliborne troops are often landed in the high ground dotting lowland areas; foot troops are used in frontal assaults and to complete efforts at encirclement. The document asserts that combined US/GVN military operations are poorly conducted, principally because of poor coordination, and that offensive actions are not conducted until artillery and air support become available. It further alleges that US troops are "frightened" of Viet Cong close-up and night attacks.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Directorate is not satisfied with several sections of the first draft of the proposed constitution, in addition to the controversial final chapter on the assembly's role as an interim legislature prior to national assembly elections. The Directorate reportedly believes that too much power has been accorded the future legislature to the detriment of the executive branch. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Premier Ky himself is opposed to those articles in the present draft which provide for elected province chiefs, and for an assembly able to propose dismissal of the prime minister, as well as to the previously mentioned final chapter of the draft. Ky said that he believes the assembly will acquiesce in his views on all of these issues.

2. In order to continue trying to resolve differences with the Directorate over the draft constitution, the Constituent Assembly postponed its 16 January plenary session. Selected assembly members met instead with a delegation from the Directorate. The joint meeting was a continuation of efforts by the government and the assembly to work out their differences over the draft constitution in an orderly manner. During the talks on the morning of the 16th, the two groups were able to reach agreement on two issues [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] These were that the inspectorate should be elected and that a constitutional clause should provide for the "reconciliation" of persons other than Communists, who had opposed the central government in the past. Another meeting will be held on 17 January.

3. The deputies themselves are aware that the first draft of the constitution is inadequate in many respects. For example, several deputies have told US Embassy officers that they have no illusions as to the unacceptable nature of the final chapter. They apparently are essentially interested in exercising some control over the presidential electoral procedures rather than in installing themselves as an interim legislature. The deputies are reportedly optimistic that the controversial sections of the constitution can be changed by negotiating with the Directorate as the articles are being debated in the assembly.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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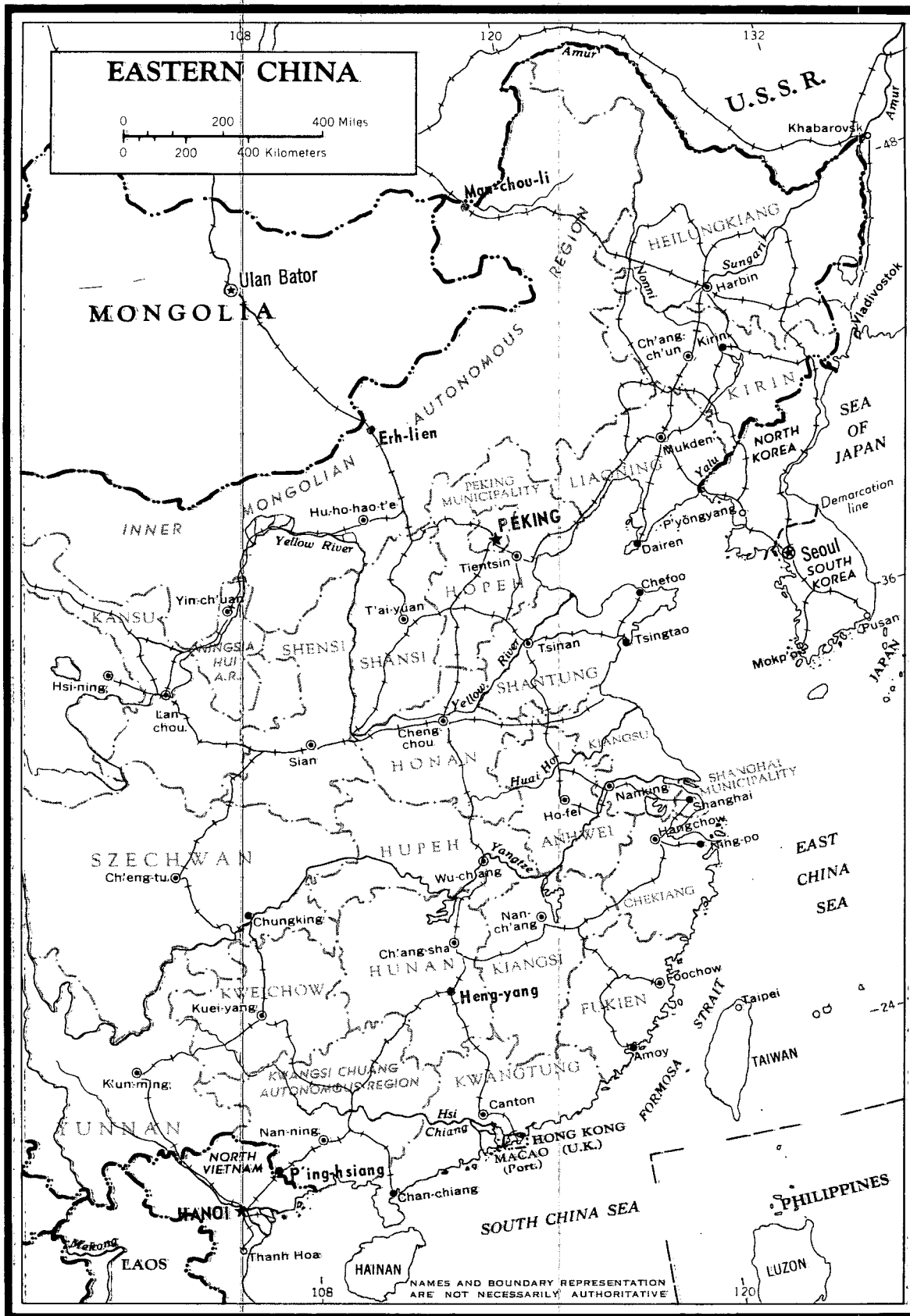
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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. There is some possibility that persisting disruptions to Chinese railroad operations have affected or soon may affect deliveries of aid to North Vietnam from and through China.

2. There is no firm evidence that rail shipments to North Vietnam have been hindered. Indications that railroad worker walkouts have occurred in widespread localities in China, however, suggest that some of the lines handling aid deliveries may be involved. The lines which carry the bulk of deliveries through China total almost 3,700 miles, consisting essentially of the Peking - Heng-yang - Ping-hsiang trunk line fed by connecting lines through Manchuria and Outer Mongolia. Other lines would be included if deliveries are made through Kunming, although so far China does not seem to have made significant use of this route. To have an important effect on deliveries to North Vietnam, however, participating Chinese railroads would have to experience almost total stoppages, since the tonnages involved are small.

3. Information on railroad disruptions has been vague as to specific lines affected.

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Peking, through which most goods from the Soviet Union are believed to pass, has been reported by foreign press correspondents as the scene of large-scale railroad worker walkouts, which have allegedly brought severe cuts in railroad service.

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